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AMERICAN WAR SONGS AND ODES.



BY ALMONT BARNES, LL.B.,

Late Captain Battery C, 1st N. Y. Lt. Arty., Fifth Corps,
Army of the Potomac.

Fraternally Inscribed to the Grand Army of the Republic.

A. BARNES, PUBLISHER,
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WASHINGTON, D. C.

SONGS AND ODES.

LIBERTY ENLIGHTENING THE WORLD.



IFT thy almighty hand,
O Liberty divine,
And let to every land
Thy torch and knowledge shine!
Not unto us alone be most thy good—
Teach all mankind their one vast brotherhood.

To kings, and since of old
Time was, that then was young,
Have homages and gold
Been given, and praises sung;
And evermore the fetters clung to men,
Which, broken, their own hands helped forge again.

But, lo, a spirit, stirred
In multitudinous chords,
Breathed through one little word
To snap the steel of swords,
And rock to ruin castles rapine builds,
Intrenching wrong, upon a thousand hills.

That spirit deifies
Thy boundless soul and form,
And from thy holy eyes
Shines into hearts made warm
To work the best for all, and unto all
Who hear thy chant, and harken to thy call.

So, light us with thy light,
Now and forevermore,
Till through all human night
Men feel its splendor pour.
On each who waits thy benediction be,
Genius of Joy, Hope-Mother, Liberty!

THE AWAKENING.



HAT does it mean?—a sound of war is heard in a land of peace!

Out of the mansions of the town, from lives of dreamy ease,

Out of the bank, out of the shop, out of the cot of the poor,

Gathering hastily, marshaled for war, the stern-faced legions pour.

Plume and epaulet, musket and sword, late symbols of holiday sport,

Have meaning while cyclopean guns keep watch from deck and fort,

And voices ring like trumpets, commanding left and right
The warlike ranks that, marching, smell the smoke of the coming fight;

While thrice a hundred thousand men are gathered from their homes,

And pour through field and street to the shrill of fifes and shudder of drums.

What does it mean? Has a foreign foe invaded our fruitful shore?

Has the lion of England risen and roared another seven years' roar?

Has the national eagle been pitted to fight the imperial bird of France?

Or do the hearts of our countrymen writhe on the point of the Mexican lance?

No—England's lion sleeps on his isle, fringed with the foam of the sea;

The eagle of France is still polite to the eagle of the free;
And the Aztec lance is not so long as the blade of America's sword,

While the Aztec fights like a suicide with life each day restored:

But listen—the answer is long enough for history to record,

And yet so short that a man may say the whole in a single word:

Treason! Treason against the freest rule the world has
 known!
 A mine is sprung that, laid in hell, might cost the devil
 his throne!
 Men from the States where statesmen sleep who gave the
 Union life,
 Men from fields where our flag has waved victorious
 through the strife,
 Statesmen nursed at the nation's breast and patriots by
 trade,
 Smite with coward blows the heart whose life-blood for
 them played.
 Soldiers taught at the nation's charge, and fed at her ample
 board,
 Turn and plunge to the hilt in the breast of the nation the
 nation's sword!
 These are they who hung like leeches upon the Govern-
 ment,
 Then left it when, as they vainly thought, its life-blood
 all was spent.
 Left it? No!—they turn to rend the limbs from the very
 dead!
 Ho! let the red hot bolts of war fall hissing on each head!
 Shall we compromise and bargain with these; propose,
 and shuffle, and plead?
 Shall we deed them half the nation's soil? In whose
 name runs the deed?
 Shall we give them the bones of Washington, to make it
 a generous trade,
 Reserving the right sometimes to visit the spot where the
 bones are laid?
 Shall we advertise in the *London Times* the end of the
 "partnership,"
 And the Capitol to sell or rent, cheap for cash or scrip?
 Ah, ye craven souls who pale at the thought of defensive
 war,
 Is not the promise of all our past enough to battle for?
 Traitors have taken treasure and life, and shall they fur-
 ther dote!
 Why, even a murdering Roman guard cast lots for a *seam-
 less* coat!
 Never the Union shall sundered be while right is better
 than wrong.

Never shall Freedom backward turn, that has onward
toiled so long.
Never another flag shall float from where the star-flag
holds
In triumph yet the hopes of thirty millions in its folds.
No manly heart will ask for a peace which covers a smoul-
dering strife,
Or fail to defend, with treasure and life, the nation's honor
and life.
No manly soul would lose the wealth of our historic years,
Or sell, for fear of trials and tears, heroic trials and tears;
Sell the glory of peace and war from Seventy-six till now—
Sell it, for what? To buy a wreath to crown a traitor's
brow?
Then let us stand for our native land—the Union and her
right—
Unfold to the storm the flag whose stars have bathed the
world in light.
The hour has come, the men are here, and victory awaits.
We fight for what our fathers won—the whole United
States!

July 16, 1861.



IN VIRGINIA.



IN Old Virginia's hills I lie,
While all around is hushed to rest,
Lie on the broad earth's generous breast,
And arched above me is the sky.

The stars shine dimly through the dark,
Like beacons of a far-off land,
And sailing on, as near the strand,
The moon rides like a silver bark.

And if a sound comes through the night
It seems to journey from afar,
Beating with wearied wings the air,
And dying ere it passes quite.

And all the hills are white with tents ;
And in the misty vales they stand,
The shelter of a faithful band
Whose breasts are Freedom's battlements.

O storied land, in which the good
Grow sad at what they look upon !
O peaceful night, when earth at dawn
May wear the crimson blush of blood !

In warrior mail we wait the morn
When Freedom, with majestic mien,
Shall stand upon these hills of green
With her proud banner battle-torn,

And with her fair face to the sun,
Made glorious with more than light,
Declare the triumph of the right,
Here by the grave of Washington.

June, 1862.

TATTOO.



HE sun has sunk behind the hills,
The moon sails high and wintry clear;
Her light falls on the lighted camps
That shine around me far and near.
Near like a village lit they seem;
Far like the fireflies' fitful gleam.

Ah, many a thousand men around
Are welcoming the restful night,
Glad that a day of toil or watch
Withdraws its labors with its light.
They but await the bugle call
That shall release from duty all.

Hark! far away the sound begins,
One only, lonely, simple strain;
Then fife and drum, and bugle tone
In tumult answer back again;
As when one bird at morn awakes
A chorus in the woods and brakes.

And all is still again; the ranks
Have answered to the evening call.
Come, O fair goddess, Rest, and smoothe
The rough beds of the soldiers all;
And Sleep with softest fingers close
The eyes that wake to watch our foes.

BEALTON STATION, VA., *January, 1864.*

BEFORE THE BATTLE.



'M lying out to-night, love,
Under the moon and stars,
That send a soft and misty light
Down by the cloudy bars
Which float before them, as a veil might move
Before the face of one serenely bright
As the Madonna. Armies hushed to sleep
Lie 'round me, quiet as the placid deep.

And all is wondrous still.
Above if there be any melody,
It comes not audibly adown to me,
Unless, perhaps, that without thought or will
My inmost sense catches some low refrain,
And knows not whence it emanates;
Yet listens but to hear it once again
Ooze through heaven's golden gates—
For it must be of heaven at this hour,
When the late bee dreams on the drooping flow'r.

And here below
Silence and slumber over all things creep;
And rest is given by a little peace,
That leadeth down to sleep
Through the low vale of tender reveries.
Peace, for the weary ones who rest for war,
Twines poppy wreaths 'round many a rugged brow,
Dreamful of those who us are waiting for
Beyond the battle shock and cannon sound.
But I, beloved—how dear to me the hour!—
I send my memory roaming after thee,
While here beneath the stars I count the dow'r
That love hath brought to me.
My heart is bathed in calm,
And full of hopes as are of roses Junes;
And over me steal pleasant memories,
Grateful as shade from great ancestral trees
In summer afternoons.

My thoughts are the thanksgiving of a psalm
In night's great temple, altared by this mound.
Whate'er of life or death awaits this scene,
Nothing annuls the glory that hath been.

I here lie dreamily upon the ground,
With wordless pray'r touching the edge of sleep,
Before the morning wakes with gradual sound
Along the stations that the armies keep.
The lifted morn may see red-handed war
Commit its giant murder. If I lie
Amid the host the grave is waiting for,
Stabbed 'mid the battle's smoky canopy
By the swift shot; or should my life,
Hot and forgetful of all save the strife,
Be shriveled by the cannon's kiss of flame
And blown away as nothing; in the name
Of all in which the best or least may trust,
I pray that from my unremembered dust
Fair peace may bloom for country, home, and wife.
Come sleep, come rest—for there is nothing more
Till day shrinks shuddering nightward from the battle roar.

PETERSBURG, VA., *July, 1864.*



THE SOLDIER'S WIFE.



I.

OW wearily the days go by,
How Silence sits a guest at home,
While she, with listless step and eye,
Still waits for one who does not come.
The sunshine streams across the floor,
A golden, solitary track,
The bees hum in and out the door,
The olden clock goes klick-a-klack;
And baby sitting wonder-eyed,
Watches the kitten's noiseless play
Till sleep comes gently, and she lies
At rest through half the summer day.

2.

When twilight cometh, dim and gray,
She sits anear the open door.
Before her lies the graveled way
O'erhung by ancient sycamore;
And through the eve she hears the cry
Of whippoorwills that near the light,
She sees the star of evening die,
And all around her broods the night:
Then, "Bye-lo-baby, baby bye,"
She sings her little one to rest,
And muses with its rosy face
Held warm and close against her breast.

3.

Beside her lowly couch she kneels,
And clasps her hands before her face—
Ah, only Christ knows what she feels,
A lonely suppliant for grace.
She prays for one who does not come,
And draws an answer from her hopes,
And then within her silent home,
While stars slide down night's silvery slopes,
She nestles close beside her babe,
And one arm o'er it shielding throws,
And dreams of joy that day denies,
Until the rose of morning blows.

THE LAST WATCH.



H, comrade old, sit here and hold
My hand, a little while.
Long, long it seems, as if in dreams,
Since last I saw your smile.
How the years pass! It is, alas,
No tent we share; no light
Of camp fires 'round the guarded ground—
I have no home to-night.

“ What did you say? Peninsula?
Remember Little Mac?
We should have beat, with no retreat—
McDowell was held back!
Ah, yes, I know they say not so
Who never saw a fight.
What matters all that to recall—
I have no home to-night.

“ The Weldon Road? There once we showed
The color of our eyes.
There Hayward broke, in blood and smoke
War-lifted to the skies.
Brave Blue or Gray, man, anyway,
The wrong side or the right,
The shifting years bring each to tears—
I have no home to-night.

“ The tented plain—oh, once again
Restore to me that home!
The ranks were true, in gray or blue—
There death need bravely come.
But here, in peace, to find release,
This is the bitterest fight.
Forgetful War, roll back your car
And take me home to-night! ”

A shuddering gasp, a loosened clasp—
A comrade passed away !
Beneath his head, a tattered shred,
His shot-torn guidon lay.
Struggles with peace, must they so cease
For him who learned to fight
Through awful days, with soul ablaze
For country and for right?

O brave and true, what do men do
To you who served so well?
Shouldered aside, your worth denied,
Your anguish who can tell?
Behind you close your country's woes—
Before her all is bright;
But broken ranks win broken thanks,
Nor tent nor home at night.



GRANT.



LONE he rests at Riverside,
The foremost of defenders,
The patriot warrior doubly tried,
The hero of surrenders.

From sleep with kindred sleepers sent,
'Mid living men's elateness,
All lonelier is the monument
Built only of his greatness.

We celebrate for Ninety-two
Time, with its egg-full zeros,
Which best we gain the grace to do
Remembering home-born heroes.
The ashes of Columbus hide
Beyond sure ken of sages—
Not for the brave at Riverside
Such satire of the ages.

With steady strength his way was won,
Through fight, o'er fit surrender,
Through darkness to the burst of sun
In storm-dispelling splendor.
Was it Jehovah gladdened men
With human hopes' salvation?
"Let us have peace!" becometh, then,
The rainbow's fit translation.

He felt the bitter, did the great
With best of great endeavor;
Staunch to a friend, so to the State;
Clean from dishonor ever.
While fate pressed to his throat its knife,
And his last suns were setting,
Patient he penned the Union's life,
And won the world's regretting.

Lift up, in vision, once again
Thy wild face, smeared and bloody,
Oh, awful War, that peace-lulled men
May gain a picture ruddy
And lurid, flamed from thy deep hell,
As once this chieftain knew it,
So it but teach, at need and well,
To justice see and do it.



NATIONAL HYMN.



LONG live America! Land of our love,
Our hearts shall bless thee, wherever we rove.
Billows may bear us afar from thy shore,
Yet from afar will we love thee the more.
Broad be thy empire o'er land and o'er sea,
While true hearts throb with the mem'ry of thee.

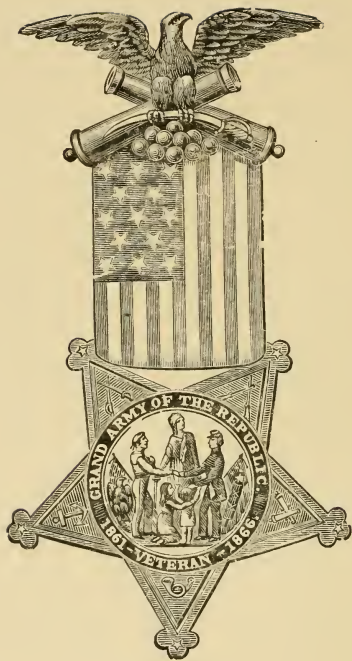
CHORUS:—Long live America!
Union! America!
Long live America,
Land of the free!

Long live America! Ever in peace
May thy proud banner unfold to the breeze;
But if a foe scorns, to honor thy right,
Lift we thy starry flag glorious in fight.
As stands thy shore to the shock of the sea,
Stand thy defenders, oh land of the free!

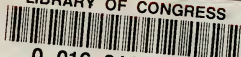
Long live, America, stainless and whole,
One while thy rivers shall oceanward roll;
One till the sun shines no more from the skies;
One till the dead at Mount Vernon arise;
One and united, while true hearts and free
Pledge life, and fortune, and honor, to thee.

Long live America! Hear thou our cry,
Ruler of nations, whose home is on high.
Thou wast our forefathers' shield and reward—
Guide thou our Union, omnipotent Lord!
And may our peace song and battle-shout be,
Long live America, land of the free!

CHORUS:—Long live America!
Union! America!
Long live America,
Land of the free!



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